

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A storage system, comprising:

a plurality of system servers connected to one another by a communication network having at least one node, wherein each system server includes at least one process that provides a storage system function independent of the states of other system servers in response to a request to the storage system that may affect multiple system servers, and wherein the storage system functions include:

at least one gateway service that includes a plurality of gateway servers, each gateway server hosting at least one client process that can process client requests and pass the resulting set of requests to the storage system and including a process that may access at least one server directory to determine the location of a system server that can service a generated client request;

at least one storage server service that includes a plurality of storage servers, each storage server including a process that accesses files stored in the storage system independent of the files accessed by other storage servers; and

at least one metadata service that includes a plurality of metadata servers, each metadata server including a process that accesses a set of metadata independent of the metadata sets accessed by other metadata servers;

wherein the at least one instance of a storage server service and at least one instance of a metadata service are separate from each other such that the services may be scaled are scalable independently of each other.

Claims 2-5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (previously presented): The storage system of claim 1, further including:

at least one server directory that includes location information and service capabilities of the system servers, the at least one server directory providing at least one server location in response to a request to the storage system.

Claim 7 (original): The storage system of claim 1, further including:

a routing request server that provides system server location information in response to a request to the storage system, the location information corresponding to a system server that is capable of servicing the request.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A storage system, comprising:

a plurality of servers arranged into at least two services, each service providing different storage system functions independent of the status of any other service, and the servers of each service being functionally de-coupled from one another, servicing requests, which may affect multiple servers, independent of the operation of other servers of the service, the services including:

a storage server service comprising a plurality of storage servers that provide access to files stored in the storage system, each storage server including an initialize function that may provide storage server location and storage server capability information, and

a metadata service comprising a plurality of metadata servers that provide access to metadata for files stored in the storage system, each metadata server including an initialize function that may provide metadata server location and metadata server capability information; and

a server directory process that receives information for a storage system request and server location and capability information from the storage and metadata server, and that provides information to locate a server capable of servicing the request;

wherein at least one instance of a storage server service and at least one instance of a metadata service are separate from each other such that the services ~~may be scaled~~ are scalable independently of each other.

Claims 9-10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (previously presented): The storage system of claim 8, wherein:

the metadata server capability information includes a quality of service value.

Claim 12 (canceled)

Claim 13 (previously presented): The storage system of claim 8, wherein:

the storage server capability information includes a set of files accessible by the storage server.

Claim 14 (original): The storage system of claim 8, further including:

a plurality of gateway servers, each gateway server including a process that can access the server directory process to determine a location of a server capable of servicing a request and then access the server at the location to service the request.

Claims 15-20 (canceled)